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14 Sept 68 (AM)

Dear Hal,

Yours of the 12th received, this PM. Yes, I'll try and locate Harber/Harper for you...and, if successful, try and arrange to meet with him. Odd, isn't it, that so many of these people--even myself, for that matter--should at one time or another be in or around Omaha? Wonder what it is, if anything, that serves as a constant. Are they all originally from here (like myself: I'm from Council Bluffs, Iowa) and thus apt to return periodically, or does this city or area have some special attraction? Coincidence and nothing more, perhaps, but still seems strange.

(No listing for Dennis Harber or Dennis Harper in current Omaha telephone directory--I have no City Directory at hand, but can check tomorrow at the Univ. or Public Library. There is a D.E. Harper/RR #1/Papillion listed in the tele. book--Papillion is a quite small community some 8 or 10 miles from Omaha that might qualify as a "suburb." A more or less farm community as I recall, but I haven't been out there for years. Tele. # is 334-5654, which means that calls are handled by the Omaha exchange. Maybe Jean and I can drive out there this week-end, just to look around. But I'd want to be reasonably sure of just who this fellow (Harber/Harper) is and what his habits are, before approaching him. If you or Garrison have any more specific information--such as a picture, kind of work he'd be apt to seek, names of any relatives or friends he might have in this area, etc.--the job would be a lot easier. But I'll let you know anything I can find out.)

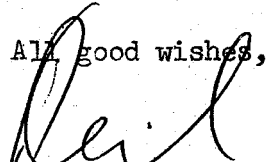
Alan Courtney I've not heard of; Si is, I believe, Kent's brother and was a lawyer in N.O. at the time I worked for Kent. He (Si) also did some work in the field for Kent--he was reporting to Kent about the way a local labor dispute (a strike, but I don't now recall what company) was being handled, the day I met him. I only met Si once or twice (at the Indep. Amer. offices) and I doubt if I would know him now if I saw him. I do recall, however, that his temperament was quite different than Kent's: Si is (or was, when I talked with him) not at all the forceful character that Kent is. He seemed shy, a rather quiet, good-natured fellow...perhaps used to being given orders by his brother. But that's about all I can tell you about him. It occurs to me, though, that Si hadn't the ideological committment(s) Kent & Phoebe apparently had...maybe he could be approached if Kent were not specifically the topic of conversation. Still, I suppose the Garrison investigation has made everyone with any political associations at all, especially of the Right and in N.O., pretty defensive. I doubt that any approach would be easy--I'm not even certain that McAuliffe would be interested in talking to anyone. I wrote him on your behalf, as you know, but neither of you has indicated any meeting took place. And certainly Martin would have less reason to avoid talking about politics than Si Courtney would--if only for the simple reason that Si would probably not want to risk unwittingly compromising his brother. (Incidentally, since you mention Lord Byron: I would say that Martin's interest in the Cuban 'Freedom' Movement--that is, the abortive attempt to overthrow Castro--was primarily idealistic...'Freedom should triumph over Tyranny,' etc. My friend was shocked and disillusioned by the failure of the ideal he had embraced. Catholicism turned out much the same way for him: it wasn't all that it needed to be for him. I'll enclose with this letter a copy

of "The Garden in the Sky," which was first published in the initial issue of Steppenwolf. Please read it carefully, and you will understand, surely, what I mean. Though at times gruff or seemingly insensitive in manner, now, McAuliffe is a deeply sensitive man who has understood the need for very high moral aspirations--and who has seen much that he believed in, or wanted to believe in, fail or be destroyed before his very eyes. Not a unique series of developments, I know--but each man responds in his own way to personal loss, and Martin has perhaps had to withstand more of this than most of us.)

I am, Hal, more interested in what you've written and in what you've been doing yourself...than in whether or not you've seen Brandy again. I'm glad she, in effect, introduced us because we've become, I think, good friends & I hope you agree. But neither Brandy nor I need to be reminded that this is 1968--not 1962. I should have made that clear, I suppose, when you stopped in Omaha to see me. Anyway, I should like to do so now: Barbara and Philip were a long time ago...and in their way beautiful. But to try and impose the past on the present & future is unwise. Let us leave the past to reflection. And, perhaps, to the poems I've already written.

Weather here cooler than usual for September, but we're glad to have it so. Great Plains summer heat infects the mind, I dare say, with a most dangerous lethargy. Almost nothing gets done. Hopefully, we'll not spend more than one more summer here. Jean has a M.A. program to complete, then we want to move elsewhere. Know of an El Dorado somewhere? Ain't none, you say? Shucks.

All good wishes,


Philip Boatright